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THE WAR AND THE COMMUNITY MOVEMENT

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I

While the war-born hope of international understanding and co-operation seems doomed to disappointment, the patriotic forces for unity set up within nations still give promise of bearing permanent fruit. The United States made a relatively small sacrifice in the struggle but shares equally with other nations the benefits of victory. The war shook America out of its provincialism and, like some powerful chemical, cast into more complete solution the various elements of its population. That old southern mountaineer spoke with significance who declared that the Hickory Division and the Twenty-seventh New York "done bust the Mason and Dixon Line" when they together broke the Hindenburg line. What years of patient education and exhortation in peace time failed to bring about the war swiftly advanced—an enlarged capacity for co-operative effort in good causes. The impetus to the community movement is the most conspicuous illustration of this hopeful phenomenon.

The armistice signed, public attention shifted from the arena of the war to the arena of community life. The nation functioned through the community in fighting to win the war; now it looks to the community to conserve the fruits of victory. The patriotic motive has been translated into a civic sense transcending that of pre-war days. The great religious and social organizations created or enlarged by the war, now that the soldier has returned, aim to build up in his home town a community life that will reflect the democratic ideal for which he fought. Concentrating on the instruction of women in rural and isolated communities, urging the war nurses to enter public health service rather than private, and enlarging and intensifying activities of local chapters, the Red Cross is endeavoring to build up higher standards of community health. The Y.M.C.A. has appealed to the returning soldier and

sailor to carry into his home community the lessons of the service and has striven to find for the soldier and sailor in every community friendship, the church of his choice, and some unselfish service. The National Catholic War Council found easy the transition from the activities of the Knights of Columbus in the training camps and in France to a full-fledged social program in the community. The activities of the War Camp Community Service in organizing and stimulating the resources of cities for the recreation of the men in uniform, instead of diminishing, have been intensified and are emerging into a broad peace-time movement for the general enrichment of the lives of all citizens. The welfare organizations are continuing in peace time and infusing their enthusiasm into the normal economic and social activities of the community.

While on the one hand the spirit of industrial conflict seems to be increasing, yet on the other the more far-sighted leaders of both labor and capital are interpreting the business of production in terms of association and partnership between employer and employee. Social well-being as well as material gain is declared to be the object of industry. Understanding the other fellow's problems and viewpoint, it is asserted, is the *sine qua non* of contentment and progress in industry.

The war itself and the social by-products of the war constitute no mean challenge to the church. The simple Christianity of the trenches is in order at home. Rabbi, priest, and minister are agreed that theories, beliefs, and doctrines must make concession to practical service. Ecclesiastical propaganda must yield to an emphasis on life, works, and social justice. An enlarged sense of community obligation has infected all creeds. Points of agreement and unity between sects, rather than points of divergence, are emphasized. The community church appears less impractical than formerly. Personal salvation, the importance of the here-after, the emphasis on negations, many declare are secondary to social service, the urgency of the present, and a positive gospel. Fraternity, churchmen say, must be practiced as well as preached. The democratic tendency to give laymen a large place in the affairs of the church which was in evidence before the war has been greatly

stimulated. It is insisted that fellowship should be the democratic ideal of the church just as comradeship was the glory of the army.

The appeal for more humanity in education, the installation for the first time of courses in community organization by many colleges and universities, the re-emphasis on community centers by governmental and private organizations, all point to the desire to have the schools catch up and carry on into the future the democratic lessons of the war. A great educator has declared that the schools were created for the present hour. Secretary Lane proposed soon after the armistice that in the village communities where he would place the returned soldiers there should be community centers where the people might gather, have their own life, express themselves as they desire, and engage in co-operative buying and selling.

The stern business of war strangely enough brought out in the American community unexpected resources in the spirit of play. The spread of the play institute and the revival of amateur sport are evidences of the new attitude. Community singing has swept the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. No public gathering, from a political convention to a church supper, is complete without mass singing. The play and pageant, like singing, are being applied to more democratic uses. General O'Ryan has proposed a municipal playhouse as a fitting memorial of the Great War. Percy MacKaye's ideal of community drama—"Splendidly and efficiently to be neighbors"—has an ever-widening appeal. Educators are now interpreting recreation as re-creation.

The community ideal of neighborliness and democracy has striking illustration in the direction that the war memorial idea has taken. The kinds of memorials that have appealed most to the fancy of the people, as well as of the artist, are such living memorials as the community house, auditorium, bridge, park, library, playhouse. The community house reflects the democratic lesson of the war and carries into the future the spirit of public service which has been so greatly stimulated. An expression of the community itself and designed to serve local needs, the community house is to become at once a new home and school of democracy.

The most unmistakable and trustworthy evidence of the community movement, however, is observable in the spontaneous spirit and enterprise of the communities themselves. The general impulse for community development is characterized by an emphasis on crying social needs, capitalization of the leisure time of the people for constructive recreation, democratic organization of the neighborhood life, and liberality in the expenditure of public funds. There is a surprising willingness to make financial investment in that intangible thing called community spirit. Co-ordination, harmony, the elimination of duplication and overlapping among organizations are the common slogans. Small cities and towns give the greater evidence of this civic awakening, although many large cities have plans for great improvements. Birmingham, Alabama, has voted a bond issue of four and one-half millions for the erection of schools, a city hall and library, and a community auditorium to cost five hundred thousand dollars. Fayetteville, North Carolina, having a population of but seven thousand, has bonded itself to the amount of \$115,000 in order to erect a community center as a war memorial and in addition has raised fifteen thousand dollars by public subscription to support a community service program that will insure ample and wide use of the community center. The St. Louis plan involves an expenditure of ninety-three million dollars and includes the construction of water works, parks, bridges, a great auditorium, water-front development, and the establishment of community centers. Indianapolis has decided to erect ten community houses to cost not less than seventy-five thousand dollars each. Within a short time after the armistice a council for "after-war service" was formed in Grand Rapids, the purpose of which was to "(1) co-ordinate and harmonize all organized efforts directed toward the solution of local after-war problems, (2) work through all private and public agencies which are doing or are preparing to do specialized work in any part of the whole field, and (3) stimulate organized effort in any particular field not already filled." The example of Reading, Massachusetts, where one thousand citizens as volunteers themselves performed the manual labor of laying out a tract of land as a memorial park, shows how a war-created

interest may fuse a whole community. Upward of one hundred cities where War Camp Community Service was in operation have taken up the work this organization laid down and will aim to provide organized recreation for the general population as well as for men in permanent naval and military posts.

The extensive programs of national and international organizations, the spontaneous impulse for civic development among the cities and towns themselves, and the concentration of fostering care upon the more isolated and economically poor communities by the federal government point to a better day in the civic life of the nation. The permanency of this fine enthusiasm and the success of plans projected will depend on whether communities have actually incorporated in themselves the lessons of the war. In fighting for a democratic cause, have we learned community democracy? Winston Churchill says that democracy has become a scientific experiment. In helping to win the war have we discovered the basic principles of successful community life? There is some evidence that the outlook for the future does not depend solely on the patriotic enthusiasm engendered by a righteous cause nor upon the natural wave of humanity and idealism that spread over a country which fought not for material gain but for the freedom of the world.

II

The community is not so conspicuous solely because Americans witnessed and shared in a war of democracy against autocracy. Nor do we look hopefully to the community inspired simply by a vague, indefinite sense of brotherhood and good will. Immortality is not gained by an immobile worship of deity. Democracy is not achieved by a patriotic subscription of loyalty to the cause of freedom. The prime importance of the community interest bears in on a citizen's consciousness when he has experienced a share in unselfish and co-operative service in its behalf. We are democratized by participation. A muscle develops through use.

The men who actually fought in the trenches are not the sole spiritual beneficiaries of the war. While it is true that in the midst of heroic sacrifice they were washed clean of sordid and

mean impulses, and a unique solidarity and comradeship were erected, at the same time the people back home were learning their own lessons in unselfish service and co-operation. When our men began to return from France, some writers with no little emotional vehemence undertook to paint a gulf yawning between the soldier heroes and ordinary people. A gulf there may have been, but it closed without any discernible social earthquake, as the history of the American Legion demonstrates. The differences between the returning soldiers and those who made them possible were after all not immeasurable. It was found that what Columbia produced she could take back to her bosom. The heroic and democratic stuff of our soldiers and sailors is also in the citizenry at large.

An immediate consequence of American participation in the war was to make civic spirit function more completely. The government fostered thrift, greater production of necessary commodities, the raising of funds for war purposes, the entertainment and welfare of the fighters. While every community looked to Washington for leadership, inspiration, and hope, Washington in turn looked to each community for fighters, goods, and morale. The great loans and other funds were raised by the skilful utilization of all the community forces in united drives. Liberty-loan parades, which brought into a single festive column representatives of all the social and racial groups of the population, reduced prejudices and increased mutual respect. What patriot could look upon the enthusiastic faces of the foreign-born or view a foreign flag carried side by side with the Stars and Stripes without feeling a thrill of sympathy and good will. However temporary, the money-raising campaigns drew the community together because of the common enthusiasm and voluntary co-operation they involved.

However, in the vast amount of so-called volunteer work during the war, more than in anything else, is found the key to the increased capacity of the American public for community effort. The war work of the countless volunteers in every community is as significant as that of the dollar-a-year patriots at Washington. In the outlook for the future, what is most important

is not what they did but how they did it. The self-appointed war tasks of many communities demanded the development of no little democratic technique.

The reaction of communities to the nearby concentration of large numbers of student soldiers was a wholesome civic improvement. Selfish interests at first sought to reap usurious profit from the soldiers' and sailors' necessity. But gradually cities and towns cleaned house and assumed for themselves the rôle of hospitality. The eager throngs of soldiers and sailors who poured cityward were a challenge to the heart and conscience of the community. The city became immediately a party to the training of the army and navy. In grappling with the leisure-time problem of the men in the military and naval service, communities learned lessons in co-operation, brotherhood, and democracy more potent and permanent than the temporary enthusiasm of a war-loan drive, the sympathetic appeal of Belgian suffering, or the loud acclaim of the glory of the embattled rights of man.

In the presence of the young men in khaki and blue, important psychological changes occurred in individuals which in the combined citizenry took form in significant social change. The visits of the soldier and sailor brought a personal as well as a social problem. In the face of such a challenge, a sense of personal responsibility for the welfare and entertainment of the men in uniform developed which expanded into an enlarged conception of the obligation of one's church, of one's club, and of the community. Business man, clergyman, clubwoman, artist, Boy Scout, musician, workingman, Rotarian, social worker, pooled their capacities to promote constructive recreation. Mr. Business Man not only served on a committee and voted an army and navy clubhouse but he personally dropped around to the club, chatted with the men, served coffee, or sold stamps. Mr. Workingman gave unpaid service in helping erect or decorate the club. The same spirit of service inspired the saloon-keeper in an industrial town to organize community singing as that which impelled a conscientious minister to permit movies and dancing in the church parlors. The ladies added to their Red Cross duties organized entertainment at the clubs, in the church, and in the home. The tirelessness, spontaneity, and

cheer of the American women in their war activities is no less remarkable than their capacity for organization and co-operation. Cutting across and uniting all groups, the community war work taught many valuable lessons of co-operation in social effort.

The varied and educative war activities of the community did more than give an outlet to the pent-up patriotic impulses of all sorts of people. The work of volunteers has given to tens of thousands a new spirit of service and has enriched the country with a veritable army of persons of some degree of training and experience in civic enterprises. The spoken conviction of American business that association and partnership are the necessary relation in industry has its basis in the personal activity of the business man in war work as well as in the fear of impending industrial revolt. The Baltimore business man with a three-hundred-a-day income who served sandwiches in a soldiers' club was being trained for the personal relation in industry. In the temporary alliances of war work an understanding developed that may yet become the basis for permanent harmonious relationships. A widespread though not always articulate spirit of social service exists. Sharp lines of social, religious, and racial cleavage have to a degree faded.

The development and outlook of the returned soldier and sailor have also had a wholesome influence on the community mind. The folks at home understand that the soldier and sailor have had a unique and broadening experience. The draft brought into the military organization a remarkable cosmopolitanism. Many an outfit learned its Americanism in the trenches. Army life was a liberal education because it provided each man with the technical training of warfare and the cultural influences of music, drama, reading, religion, and social intercourse in camp and city. However, the chief lesson that the soldier and sailor themselves say they have learned alike from the monotonous grind of the training camp and the acutely poignant trial of battle is that of comradeship. Returned to civil life, they mean to have a part in building a new humanity on the basis of the fine fraternity of the military and naval life. This point of view is having no uncertain influence on the community in this period of reconstruction.

The imaginative recreation so generously utilized everywhere has had a great influence in the community. Mass singing has served to melt the ice of civic indifference and has become the forerunner of co-operative activities of more substantial character. "People act less on reasoned conviction than on the spur of emotional or instinctive attitudes." The harmony of large diverse groups singing with one purpose results in united civic activities. Community drama, pageantry, and amateur theatricals have also had their socializing influence.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the spirit of play was abroad in the land far more during the war than before. This was the result of the camp athletic games and the attempt of the community to provide recreation for the soldier and the sailor. The community not only provided athletic contests, games, parties, and dances, but participated in these activities with their soldier and sailor guests. Joining in the game had the same fine socializing effect as community singing. Team play, harmony, brotherliness, and co-operation were the visible effects. Understanding, sympathy, postponement of individual to collective ends are the social by-products of collective play.

The popularity of the community house as a memorial is partly accounted for by the popularity of the soldiers' club the country over. The club in town and the hut at camp came to represent warmth, good cheer, camaraderie, and the spirit of brotherhood. They had something of the home touch. Returned from the service the soldier and sailor naturally favor a permanent institution of a similar character. The community, too, became accustomed to the club as a common gathering place, since it was there they assembled to entertain the men in the service. Moreover, the club represented the labor and the love of the many different groups who had a part in making it possible. An investment in a common house for the whole citizenship is a logical consequence of an investment in a club for a part of the citizenship that had donned the uniform. An additional cause of popularity of the community house is the powerful conviction that such a building is most symbolic of a living democracy and of the American spirit in the war.

The patriotic spirit in the country was not always articulate, not always well directed. Hospitable impulses and efforts were often wasted in overlapping. However, the government set in motion in the community civilian agencies which helped to make practical and productive the spontaneous spirit of service without superimposing authority or crushing initiative. The War Camp Community Service, in particular, functioned as a co-ordinating and stimulating agency, a clearing house for recreational activities provided for the soldier and sailor. A non-sectarian, non-partisan agency, it was able to teach many communities the art of doing things together with dispatch and effectiveness. It could not create community spirit, but it helped the community to apply it.

No institution worth the name in the community but has felt the impress of an enlarged community sense. The church could not but be stirred to self-examination as it was drawn more and more into the community activities of war work. The direct contacts of the Y.M.C.A., Knights of Columbus, and the Jewish Welfare Board—the agencies of the church—with the men in the service contributed immensely to the lesson. No chamber of commerce could meet the innumerable calls of the community without enlarging its social ideals. No club could open its doors to the soldier and sailor or promote a liberty loan without imbibing some of the spirit of a larger brotherhood. No refined home could receive an awkward, rough-shod farmer lad without being drawn closer to him and his kind. War activities made for practical neighborliness.

The country has begun reconstruction with a generous force of community spirit which will make for sanity, safety, and enhanced national efficiency if utilized. Shall the rich resources of trained personality in every community be demobilized and dismissed? Shall the spirit of unity and brotherhood go to waste? Will the warm impulses for service, which the war stirred in so many people, be permitted to dry up?

III

The intelligent application of the war-inspired enthusiasm and fervor for the community good to a sane program is the urgent task of the present. Far too many citizens, failing the glamor

and romance of the war motive, have already relapsed into pre-war indifference. Wisely guided, the spirit of neighborliness will not vanish into thin air but will crystallize in substantial opportunities for a larger life for the average citizen.

A practical plan of community service must have its chief inspiration and support not in a superimposed program but in local initiative. While many isolated and socially and economically poor communities will welcome a community service institute sent out by the state government, yet the towns and cities and even some rural districts will be averse to outside interference. In the main, each community must work out its own salvation. Local pride has been accentuated by the self-revelation brought about by war activities. A central and stimulating agency there may be, which will circulate successful ideas and methods or even furnish skilled community workers on request. But the service of the clearing-house cannot be thrust upon the community.

Community action must be as practical as it is spontaneous. The basis of community service must be organized friendship. Many cities that have a wealth of institutions, agencies, and societies that represent the finest motives of Christian spirit and friendship seldom have effected co-ordination and co-operation. They work at cross-purposes, overlap, waste effort. The basis of team success is the absolute performance by each member of the duty assigned him. The secret of a real neighborhood life is the acceptance of the personal responsibilities for which each individual is peculiarly qualified.

The objective of the community movement is, briefly put, a larger life for everybody. It means better moral, industrial, and social conditions, more production and productivity, more play and recreation, better health and better education, more adequate neighborhood expression. It means Americanization that will teach American ideas, customs, standards of living, democratic traditions, and social life as well as the English language. Community service may not fuse ecclesiastical organizations but it can unite churches in a wide range of community projects that imperil no special religious doctrine. The community will work for a healthful and profitable use of leisure time, by the provision

of parks, playgrounds, baths, municipal playhouses, community houses, museums, art galleries, libraries, band concerts, community singing, and pageants. The joint consideration of housing conditions, health, and employment may lead quickly to the orderly and friendly consideration and settlement of problems of wages, hours, profit-sharing, industrial management, and partnership.

The attainment of such an objective calls for a facile and adaptable organization of community resources. No organization of an institutional character can organize community spirit and make it function in practical ways. The first instinct of an institution is self-perpetuation. It demands a loyalty to itself that ultimately narrows its possibilities. It is essentially conservative and static. Only a community agency can successfully co-ordinate and stimulate community activity. It must aim at service, results; be content to accomplish in the name of other organizations; be dynamic, progressive, objective. It must guide, rather than dominate; point the way, suggest; act as a clearing-house for practical ideas from without; dispense methods, not means. It cannot create community spirit, but can harness that spirit to practical programs. The community agency is the transformer into which is poured the combined genius and social force of the community and from which issues forth forms of practical service that warm and brighten the life of every citizen.

Whatever the name or character of the agency, it must be representative. In cosmopolitan and heterogeneous neighborhoods, an organization of sectarian, political, or social bias is obviously impractical. A truly representative body is practical in any community; that the war demonstrated. The community committee, commission, or council, representing the humblest as well as the proudest, may approach any problem fearlessly and openly. It seeks through the community to do the practical things that make for human happiness. Municipal legislation as well as private initiative are its tools. It utilizes existing social machinery and creates new machinery only when necessary. The school, the community center, the church, the association, the club, the home, the individual are the working members of the great community team.

Unless the schools, in their teaching, catch up the new ideals of association and neighborliness, community spirit will eventually die. The old individualistic ideals must not be instilled into the minds of the pupils to the exclusion of the new conception of the necessity and glory of co-operative action. Each child must grow up realizing that he is a responsible member of a neighborhood and must be taught the how as well as the why of community service. The community center should inculcate citizenship in terms of civic activity, an American attitude of mind, and a well-rounded life as well as in terms of the three R's.

A well-rounded life has its play time. Recreation as an end in itself and as an approach to more vital social developments has come to stay. Community singing, plays, pageantry, and physical recreation must be stimulated among adults as well as among the youth. The outlet to physical and moral energy that the play of the camp and the game of warfare furnished the soldier and sailor must hereafter be provided the average citizen through constructive relaxation. Physical sport and imaginative recreation helped to produce good soldiers. They will help to make good citizens.

The church, the club, and the association as well as the school must prepare to play a larger part in the community life than they have heretofore. They must participate directly in many of the everyday problems of the everyday man and inspire their individual constituents to activity in others. While the church cannot transform itself into a settlement or nursery and continue to fulfill its own distinctive mission, yet it can have a large part in making the community function through its influence and teaching. The business men's association, the social club, the Grange, must broaden their activities to include adherent as well as inherent community interests. In community service, every participating organization will find a larger life; they will not be cramped or restricted. Neighborliness pays.

Says Mazzini: "We must make ourselves strong and great again by association." The war has created the sentiment for unity and fraternity and has revealed the method. Its termination has released rich resources in dedicated personality which have

the power to make civic achievement possible. The time is ripe for community service. All political creeds, social groups, religious sects agree to it in principle. The approval of both labor and capital is a safe guaranty of its success, if wisely handled. If an autonomous expression of the community conscience, functioning through a representative agency and projecting a practical program, it will operate successfully. It should tend to make more articulate the desires and aspirations of the common people and help them to realization. It should teach the lesson of mutual responsibility and brotherhood. It should interpret each group of the community to every other group. It should utilize to the full the newly discovered capacities of that great body of citizens who labored in war work at home and also of the men who defended the nation's honor on land and sea. It should make for stability, justice, neighborliness. It should do its work so well that ultimately it will cease to have need for existence because it will have taught the government how to function fully in every phase of community life.